



NRC NEWS

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PLENARY STATEMENT OF THE UNITED STATES AT THE SECOND REVIEW MEETING OF THE CONVENTION ON NUCLEAR SAFETY

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Chairman
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission

April 15, 2002
Vienna, Austria

The U.S. Government and our delegation to this Convention are pleased to have the opportunity to attend this Second Review Meeting of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS). Our participation reaffirms our view of the importance of international cooperation in the promotion of a high level of nuclear safety worldwide.

The next two weeks will provide a unique opportunity for discussions concerning activities to enhance nuclear safety in virtually all States utilizing nuclear energy for electric power production. I am confident that this forum will benefit all such States -- including the United States -- and will provide a better understanding of current issues and trends. Each of us bears the important responsibility of ensuring nuclear safety within our countries. I am hopeful that this review meeting will identify ways to improve nuclear safety and that, in response to our discussions, nuclear safety will be enhanced around the globe.

The United States acknowledges that the purpose of this meeting is to concentrate on the safety of nuclear installations. I recognize that the attacks of September 11th have focused world attention on the elevated threat of terrorism, including the possibility of nuclear-related terrorism. These terrible assaults have caused all of us to examine the risk of a terrorist effort to exploit any vulnerabilities in the defenses of nuclear power plants or to use nuclear materials for harmful purposes. It is not the purpose of this meeting to discuss the measures that countries are taking to address the need for heightened safeguards and security programs. But I do not want the absence of this matter on our meeting agenda to imply that such threats are being taken lightly. There have been aggressive efforts in the United States to respond to the terrorist threat. And the United States supports appropriate activities in other

fora, including activities through the auspices of the International Atomic Energy Agency, that will provide focused attention on the security dimension of our safety responsibilities. This approach will allow this review meeting to focus more broadly on the challenges to nuclear safety arising from all types of risks.

As you are all well aware, the Convention on Nuclear Safety seeks to achieve the improvement of safety through the peer review process that will be undertaken over the next several days. It is apparent that the Convention will only be as effective as each of us makes it. Each of us should welcome the probing inquiry of other colleagues, for it is through the ensuing discussion that all of us can learn and improve our practices.

I also believe that all of us should view the Convention on Nuclear Safety as a living document. We have the opportunity to structure and focus these review meetings in ways that will better facilitate the achievement of the Convention's objectives. With that thought in mind, I urge all of you to consider during the course of this meeting how we might make the next review meeting even more effective. We are embarked on a common and important enterprise in improving nuclear safety and we should ensure that these review meetings are designed in a way that best furthers that objective.

I look forward to presenting the U.S. National Report, where I will describe how the United States seeks to meet its obligations under the Convention. I encourage your questions as I am hopeful that the resulting discussion will provide us all with insights that will be helpful in furthering efforts to enhance nuclear safety around the globe. Similarly, U.S. delegates will actively engage in the peer review of the programs of other Contracting Parties, and I hope that our questions and comments will be of use to you. It is only through a vigorous and candid review that the objectives of the Convention can be met.

I would like to conclude by expressing my country's support for, and confidence in, CNS President Gregoric. His experience in leading international groups addressing similarly complex nuclear safety issues will directly affect the successful outcome of this meeting. We pledge our fullest cooperation in assisting him with this important task.

Thank you.